1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

detail of the work. He disapproves of the habit which some painters have of adding novelties or original motives to the work. His view of his art is entirely mechanical and he knows little of a painter's technique. He practically only uses bought colours, and though he knows that a paint can be lightened by the addition of chalk, he does not know how to darken colours or how to mix his own colours. It is worth noting that before he started to learn to paint he occasionally drew people and birds for his own amusement, but that after he had been taught he never drew a line for the pleasure of it, but only when required to do so. His own house is completely undecorated.

All lamas acquire considerable dexterity in the fashioning of impermanent sacrificial objects for different ceremonies; these are made at great speed, with astounding agility and deftness. The most complicated objects are the *deu*, or house of supernaturals, which consist of varied and elaborate geometrical designs in various coloured thread twisted round bamboo splinters, and fastened on to a single bamboo upright. Models of different supernaturals, of a more or less life-like appearance, are made out of the flour of different grains mixed with water to form a paste, or out of mud, and are decorated with butter, plain or dyed to different colours, various coloured wools and pieces of thread and cloth. The Mun decorate their sacrifical objects far less, but they occasionally use containers of green bamboo, on the outside of which elaborate geometrical designs are quickly and accurately scratched with the point of a knife.

The knife is practically the Lepcha's only instrument. The knives are of iron with a wooden handle and a blade about eighteen inches long and three inches wide; the whole of one side is a cutting edge and the tip is square, not pointed. These knives are now bought from traders in Mangan or Gangtok; formerly they were got from Tibetans in exchange for produce. As soon as a boy achieves physical independence he is given a small knife of his own, and, except in the case of lamas when they are officiating, you can never see a Lepcha outside his house without his knife in a one-sided bamboo scabbard slung by his side. This knife is used for every conceivable purpose, from lopping trees on land about to be cultivated, to cutting up meat or wood for any domestic or agricultural task. Except for a couple of hatchets, which are loaned about the village when big trees have to be cut down, and short hoes for terracing, these knives are the universal instrument for every purpose. Girls

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them.

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing.

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum.

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

PATEK, THE HEAD OF A HOUSEHOLD OF SIX AT 17. WITH HIM PONGRING, THE MONASTERY GUARDIAN

CHÉLÉ, WHO DOES NOT WANT TO MARRY HIS AUNT

[Facing p. 160]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHILDREN

Six-year-old girl, Pankek, with her sickle.

Four-year-old girl with her necklace with the snail-shells on, so that her soul can escape from devils. On the right the little packet with her sloughed navel-string.

[facing p. 288]

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1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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KURMA *GYAPÖN*

[facing p. 384]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

saying " Why don't you keep your wife in order? She is always going down shamelessly to your nephew's house." At this the two uncles quarrelled and the younger one committed suicide by taking poison. But this only started the trouble. The surviving uncle said to Ahyok " This death is your fault and you must pay all the expenses of the funeral ceremonies." Ahyok protested that it was not his fault; his aunt used to come to visit him; how was he responsible? and anyhow he had no money. But the uncle insisted and a meeting was held of the Mandal and *youmi*. To this meeting Ahyok went taking with him a pig, fifteen rupees and a load of *chi*. I stopped at home with my Mother. My brother admitted that he used to sleep with the woman and the meeting decided that he must pay for the funeral expenses and ignored his plea of poverty.

'Then my brother returned home and went up to the loft and took there the poison *took-ra-kyet nyung* which is used in hunting[18] and swallowed it. Then he came down and said " Those people say I must pay for what is not my fault; so I shall die." He came down in front of the house and walked about backwards and forwards. I asked him what was the matter and caught hold of him as he walked backwards and forwards. Then my brother drew his *chimli* (*a pointed knife which is worn in front of the body at the waist*) and cried " Come on! Come on! I will kill all who come near me." Then I caught hold of his right hand and Mother took the other; he made a lunge at my Mother and nearly killed her but I pulled him back in time. I finally managed to wrench the knife from his hand and then with my Mother's help pushed him on to the ground. I forced his mouth open and saw that his tongue was swelling and his hands were clenched; so I knew he had taken poison. I sent our younger brother to get the root of wild raspberry and hens' droppings; the root was pounded and mixed with the droppings and given him as an emetic, but it was too late and he died.'[19]

[18] 'People also wear a tiny quantity wrapped up in a thick cloth attached to their clothing near their heart as a protection against devils.'

[19] The fact of the suicide is independently confirmed by a great number of people though the reasons which caused it are somewhat different. Jiroong thought that he committed suicide because he was reproved for not working in the fields but instead going into the forest to look for wild tubers. Tafoor knew that the suicide was caused by the inability of some man to control his wife after he had been warned and thought Ahyok's suicide directly followed

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

shredded and twisted into a thread, is also used for all the bindings.

The bow is grasped with the thumb, second, third, and fourth fingers of the left hand, the first finger remaining straight out and pointing in the direction of the mark. The arrow rests against the left side of the belly of the bow and is held with the thumb and first finger of the right hand, which grasp it over the string. The bow is held in a vertical position and the arrow is drawn back until its head is about two inches in front of the belly. This is for shooting at normal ranges; but if it is wished to increase the distance the arrow can be drawn back behind the belly, in which case the whole bow is pointed slightly upwards in order to give the arrow a higher trajectory. In order to tighten the bow-string it is merely undone and given a few twists. Some people wear a protector bracelet of bullock's horn on the left wrist, but this is not really essential.

In addition to the ordinary bow used for hunting there is also a small pellet bow, with which mud pellets, about the size of a marble, are used. It is used principally to kill small birds and also to scare them away from the crops, and is really little more than boys' plaything.

The only tool in use is the *ban*, a very slightly curved knife about fourteen inches in length. It looks something like a rather clumsy and heavy carving knife, but with a rounded end instead of a point. It is used for everything, from making bows and arrows to the construction of a house; and while in European hands it appears to be a clumsy weapon, Lepchas are able to use it successfully for the very finest work. No Lepcha, not even a Lama, is ever without his *ban*, which is worn in a bamboo half-sheath and suspended over one shoulder by a length of cane. They are far more skilful in its use than the Gurkha is with his *khukri*, another general utility weapon, which incidentally is never used as a boomerang, as some of the tall stories current during the war years would lead one to suppose. There are no black-smiths among the Lepchas, and *ban* blades are imported

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth, in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the procedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the house after the age of two. When it is about one month old its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose. By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its wants known to others. A few children can never be taught to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished in any other way.

At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time; but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children are taught that when anyone gives them anything they should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever a child was given anything it immediately shared it with its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha children.

Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur, possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool. It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back:

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals. It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Another weapon commonly used by the Rong is the knife Bakob. It has a straight blade and a gradually narrowing wooden hilt.

The Rong tribesman, in striking contrast to the other peoples, always carries his knife on his right hip while the others carry the Nepalese Kukuri on the left hip. The knife is the instrument most commonly used by the Lepchas. It serves to cut down trees, to divide the game and for countless other purposes.

That, in brief, is the equipment of the Lepcha hunters and their temperament. We have already seen how all this is linked with religion, *viz.* by the performance of sacrifices and the description of the hunt-deities. The Rong, or at least a part of them, have been, without doubt, originally, purely hunters. This belief is confirmed by Gorer, "According to Kahlyeu, (and the tradition is supported by others) until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lepcha were entirely nomadic, only building temporary huts and travelling about the forests, living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which the Lepcha have considerable knowledge, for they know the edible (but not, as European tradition believes, the medicinal) properties of nearly every plant and tree. Iron for knives, Kahlyeu says, was introduced in the time of his father's grandfather, that is to say, the first half of the eighteenth century. About a generation later the Lepcha started living in permanent houses and were able to hold or increase their stock of domestic animals. Private property in the land must have developed somewhat later."[108]

Besides being hunters the Rong are also farmers. According to their legends they obtained their first seeds of dry rice, millet, maize and gurkins from their ancestral spirits in Mayal. They came as hunters to the land of their ancestors and were asked whether they possessed any grains for food. As they replied in the negative, they were given grain with instruction about its cultivation. At first, rice was used only for sacrificial purposes. They could only test whether the rice was ready by biting it with their teeth, and when they did so they found that the rice was sweet, and henceforward they began to eat rice as a food.

108. Gorer, op. cit. p. 69 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

dress is with sleeves) held with a girdle, and a jacket over it. The head gear consists of a cloth worn in the manner of the Nepalese women. The old head-dress for the men was a thimble-shaped hat woven from bamboo; see book-cover. (Fig. 33-36).

The Rong folk wear rings, bracelets, and necklaces as ornaments. But one will never come across a case of a Rong wearing any ornamentation to the nose, the feet and the toes. The most common implement used by the women is the sickle. A bent sickle hook-shaped at the upper end is called bahur in the Lepcha tongue, and kurpa in Nepalese. It is used for cutting wood and the branches of trees. Another kind of sickle, in the shape of a half moon, is called angsu (sikāl in Nepalese) and is used to mow grass and weeds. The third type has a toothed edge, and is used as a kind of saw. It is called angsu in Lepcha and ancher in Nepalese. A girl is given her sickle at the age of seven or eight, and the boy his knife, so that from a very early age they may be able to practise the use of the most universal of instruments. Usually it is carried in the belt at the back. (Fig. 37-44)

The most important of the implements used for farming is the wide shovel-like hoe, and it is used for loosening the earth and clearing it of weeds. There are in addition two or three pronged hoes used for loosening the earth and relieving it of weeds.

The plough has been taken over from the Nepalese. It consists of a horn shaped piece of wood, which is tipped by the iron ploughshare. The drawing beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle with a handle to steer with. The beam is fixed to the yoke which is drawn by two oxen.

The economy of the Rong corresponds entirely with that of the other mountain peoples of South-East Asia and South China, *e.g.* the Miau. They were originally hunters who have taken over to farming. They have certainly not learnt the old agricultural economy from other peoples, but they absorbed into themselves the people who practised the arts of farming. Domestic animals are reared mainly for the purpose of sacrifice and not for any economic gain, and they are of the greatest importance. The combination of hunting with

142
231
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25. Lepcha children starting for field work

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26. Lepcha women planting rice

Fig. 23-24 p. 99

[End Plate 9]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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37. Lepcha grandmother cutting bamboo

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38. Lepcha children

[End Plate 15]

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

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412
313

39. Lepcha girl cutting bamboo

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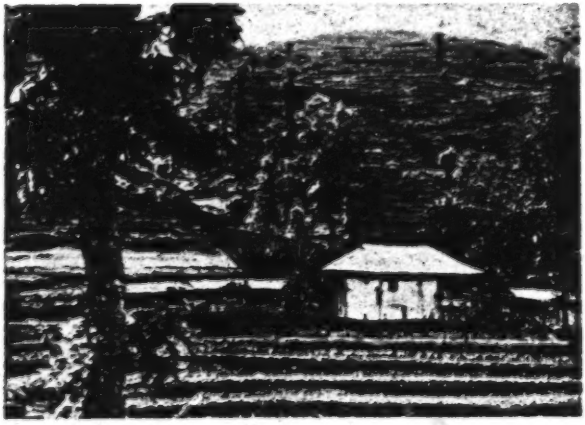
137



40. Cultivations of the Rai

[End Plate 16]